

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method for collecting network usage data without associating personally
5 identifiable information with the usage data comprising:

obtaining an identifier representing one or more users of a computer network;

creating an anonymized identifier using the obtained identifier;

collecting data being transmitted across the computer network;

associating the anonymized identifier with the collected data if the collected data is
10 sent to or from the one or more users to create a transaction record; and

storing the transaction record in a database.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the obtained identifier is a Mobile Subscriber
Integrated Services Digital Network (MSISDN) number.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the obtained identifier is a static Internet
15 Protocol (IP) address.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the anonymized identifier is created by
20 applying a one-way hashing function to the obtained identifier.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the anonymized identifier is created by applying a one-way hashing function to the obtained identifier and a security key.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the one-way hashing function is the Secure Hashing Algorithm 1 (SHA-1).

7. The method of claim 5, wherein the one-way hashing function is the Message Digest 4 (MD4) algorithm.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein the one-way hashing function is the Message Digest 5 (MD5) algorithm.

9. The method of claim 5, wherein the one-way hashing function is the Digital Encryption Standard (DES).

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the act of obtaining an identifier representing one or more users of a computer network includes:

receiving packets sent by an authentication server;

extracting an identifier from the received packets.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the authentication server is a RADIUS authentication server.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the received packets are RADIUS authentication packets.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein the authentication server is a Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) server.

14. A method for collecting computer network usage data without associating personally identifiable information with the usage data comprising:

identifying a user of a computer network;

creating an anonymized identifier representing the identified user of the computer network; and

storing network transaction data associated with an anonymized identifier.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the anonymized identifier is associated with a classification.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the classification is a geographical location.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the geographical location is a Census block group code.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the geographical location is a state.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the classification is a zip code.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the classification includes a telephone area code.

21. The method of claim 15, wherein the classification includes a telephone exchange.

22. The method of claim 15, wherein the classification includes one from the group consisting of: wireless, satellite, dialup, DSL, and ISDN.

23. The method of claim 15, wherein the classification is a job function code.

24. A method for associating anonymized identifiers to a classification, comprising:

obtaining an identifier representing one or more users of a computer network;

creating a first anonymized identifier using the obtained identifier;
creating a classification record by associating a classification with the first
anonymized identifier; and
storing the classification record in a database.

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25. The method of claim 24, further comprising:

creating a second anonymized identifier using the first anonymized identifier;
collecting data being transmitted across the computer network;
associating the second anonymized identifier with the collected data if the collected
data is sent to or from the one or more users to create a transaction record; and
storing the transaction record in a database.

26. A computer system for collecting network usage data without associating
personally identifiable information with the usage data comprising:

a communication port coupled to a computer network, the computer network
providing access to one or more servers;

one or more processors; and

a memory containing computer instructions that

identify a user of the computer network;

create an anonymized identifier representing the identified user of the
computer network; and

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